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Heroic Torrance Truck Driver Averts Explosion After Crash



PLANNING SESSION — Members of all Harbor area Welfare Planning Councils will meet at Harbor College April 8 for a series of workshops on phases of community development, it was reported yesterday by the Urban Renewal Committee of the overall group. Purpose of the conference is to learn how conditions in communities may be remedied by city programs. Here Herma Tillim, of the planning committee, and Bob Mayer, director of the Harbor Area Welfare Planning Council, look over agenda of April meet.

Spring Opening Will Be Feted Thursday

Fashion-conscious readers of the Torrance Press are cordially invited to scan the special Spring Opening section of next Thursday's issue for the latest of modes and the greatest of bargains in the South Bay area.

Newest styles for women, children and men will be featured in this extra special display section, designed to herald the beginning of the Spring season.

Fashions in shoes, clothing, furniture will be displayed attractively for the spruce-up period ahead.

Local nurseries and building material concerns have stocked up glowing floral decorations and ideas to enhance the home and will display them in this section's pages.

Manufacturers of appliances and household equipment will also show off the latest products in their field. There will be something displayed for every member of the family.

Watch for it. This special Spring Opening section will appear in Thursday's edition of your Torrance Press.

Realtors Request New Court Site In Civic Center

In a sharply worded resolution, the Torrance - Lomita Board of Realtors this week added their voice to the rising clamor demanding that the new Southwest Superior Court be located in Torrance.

The resolution read, "The Torrance-Lomita Board has been informed that a new court house will be constructed to serve the Southwest Superior Court District, and the same shall have administrative offices of the County; that the site be established in either the Inglewood or Torrance Civic Center.

TORRANCE IS CENTER

"It is the opinion of the membership of this Board that the tremendous growth in population which is expected in this area within the next decade, in addition to the growth in merchandising and industrial facilities, will make the Torrance Civic Center the heart of the Centinella Valley and the South Bay area.

"It is further requested that the boundaries of the Southwest District be altered to include Palos Verdes Peninsula and the Carson area."

Fire Destroys Garage; Truck, Automobile Lost

An early morning fire yesterday destroyed a garage in Torrance. A pickup truck and an automobile parked in the garage were lost in the fire.

Firemen, who were at the scene for two hours, have been unable to estimate the value of the loss.

The garage was behind the home of John Rynhart, 1207 Hickory Ave. Rynhart also owned the 1960 truck and 1955 passenger car which were destroyed.

Reported at 2:14 a.m., the fire kept the firemen busy until shortly after 4 a.m.



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Commended for 'Quick Thinking' by Police

Quick thinking on the part of a Torrance truck driver last week averted a possible holocaust on the Hollywood Freeway and brought commendations from the police and from residents of nearby areas.

Ernest F. Bovee, of 2870 Sonoma, driver of a propane truck that overturned on the freeway, was credited with possibly saving the lives and property of dozens of people through sheer quick thinking and immediate action following the accident.

While driving the tanker, loaded with the volatile and highly explosive fluid, the

axle of the trailer broke, shearing off the back wheels of the vehicle, which overturned.

Bovee quickly raced to the rear of the truck, uncoupled the trailer and then drove the truck a way to prevent a double explosion if the trailer blew up.

OFFICERS COMMEND
Police officers on the scene complimented Bovee who came back to the scene and waved cars past the wreck.

"Bovee took care of all of the possible safety measures," they said, "and then stood there beside that loaded 'bomb' motioning

vehicles not to stop but to keep going out of the danger zone."

The driver commented that it was a "miracle" that the tank didn't explode and shower flaming propane over the whole area. "One little leak, one break in that tank, and the whole area could have been deluged in flame," police officers said.

Bovee put it more simply. "Drivers of propane trucks live with the expectancy of having just ONE accident," he said.

The driver is married and has one daughter, age 15.

BLAME MARITAL DIFFICULTY . . .

Firemen Rescue Despondent Man After Drop Into Dominguez Drainage Channel

An attempted suicide was forestalled late last week by the concerted efforts of Torrance police and firemen.

Firemen scaled ropes to rescue a badly injured man who had apparently attempted to kill himself by diving into a 25-foot drainage channel at the 1800 block of West Artesia Blvd.

Police officers, who kept the crowd at a minimum and aided firemen in the rescue, reported that it took more than an hour to extricate the victim, Gerald Hixman, 23, who lived in a nearby trailer park, from the storm drain.

Reason for Hixman's attempt was given as despondency-over marital difficulties.

A companion, David Lawrence, 24, told investigating officers that Hixman ran to a bridge over the channel, swung out over the void and dropped.

Torrance Fire Captain Sam Dial and firemen Fred Bickar and Carl Hanni, descended on ropes to aid the stricken victim. They placed him in a stretcher which was hoisted gently through high voltage lines that extend across the bridge.

The victim was taken to Harbor General Hospital where attending physicians said that he suffered internal injuries and fractures of the right arm and leg. Rescue was directed by Battalion Chief Gene Walker.

Torrance Driver Crashes Into Train; Treated for Injuries

Lawrence Schmitzer, 23, of 4312 W. 180th St., Torrance, suffered broken ribs, chest injuries and facial cuts when his 1958 convertible went out of control and sheared off a telephone pole and crashed broadside into a railroad gas tanker in El Segundo early Friday morning.

Traffic was diverted on Sepulveda Blvd. more than four hours as railroad crews tried to move the tanker back onto

the tracks north of Rosecrans Ave.

A passenger in the convertible was 22-year old James W. Green of Lennox who suffered severe facial cuts.

The injured men were taken to Hawthorne Community Hospital. Both men were reported in satisfactory condition.

YMCA Campaign Reaches Half-Way Mark In Annual Appeal for Operating Funds

Albert Isen, general chairman of the 1961 Torrance YMCA campaign, announced that the "Y" has reached the half-way mark in its annual appeal for operating funds.

Nearly \$17,750 has been raised thus far among industry, commercial concerns, professional people and parents of YMCA youth. \$35,500 is the 1961 goal and budget for the local youth agency.

Isen lauded work of division chairmen, Marshall Stewart; Rod Swartz, Stanley Remelmeier; James A. Davis; and Lou Schlanger. More than 200 volunteer YMCA campaigners are making calls under the leadership of these men.

Isen pointed out that the local YMCA succeeds or fails on the basis of this annual drive. Since the Torrance "Y"

receives no Chest funds, the entire budget must be raised through sustaining memberships. During 1960, the local YMCA served more than 6,000 local boys and girls through 118 youth clubs and 16 separate sessions of camp. These statistics indicate that the Torrance YMCA operates the third largest youth program in the western states.



DOUBLE OPENING—Prominent civic officials took part in the Thursday morning opening of Dixie Cal's Bar-B-Cue, 23011 Hawthorne Blvd. Shown officiating at the ribbon cutting are

Chief of Police Percy Bennett, William Shawger, president of the Torrance Chamber, Betty Baker, Cal Fowler, owner, Councilman J. A. Beasley and Mayor Albert Isen.



HUNDREDS of family shoppers attended the grand opening Thursday of Kinney Shoes, 20616 Hawthorne Blvd., Torrance. Among the civic dignitaries present were, left to right, Don Perry, Kinney Gardens executive; Bill Shawger, president of

Torrance Chamber of Commerce; Betty Baker, Miss Torrance; Mayor Albert Isen; Bob Hasshaw, Torrance Kinney Store executive; and Councilman Nicholas O. Drale.

—Press Photo

Special Spring Section Out Thursday